

STATUS: The meeting will be open to the public. On June 15, the time between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. will be set aside for public comments regarding the proposed certifications of the Evansville office. On June 16, the time between 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. will be set aside for public comments. Approximately 200 seats will be available to the public on a first-come, first-served basis.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: On June 15, consultation on the proposed closure of the Evansville weather office. On June 16, the meeting will include status updates on the Huntsville, AL, proposed certifications and consultation on the proposed closure of weather offices at Beckley, WV; Boston, MA; Concord, NH; Fort Smith, AR; Hartford, CT; Kahului, HI; Olympia, WA (Fire Weather); Portland, ME; Providence, RI; Salem, OR (Fire Weather); Wenatchee, WA (Fire Weather); and Worcester, MA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nicholas Scheller, National Weather Service, Modernization Staff, 1325 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283. Telephone: (301) 713-0454.

Dated: May 18, 1999.

John J. Kelly, Jr.,

Assistant Administrator for Weather Services.
[FR Doc. 99-13500 Filed 5-26-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 050399C]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Addition to public meeting agenda.

SUMMARY: In the **Federal Register** notice dated May 10, 1999, an additional subject has been added to the agenda for the meeting of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Council staff, telephone: 907-271-2809.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In the **Federal Register** of May 10, 1999, in FR Doc. 99-1697, on page 25026, in the third column, the following item has been added under groundfish subjects:

The Council will receive a NOAA General Counsel opinion with regard to an amendment requiring retention of

demersal shelf rockfish. The Council may reconsider previous action taken on this amendment.

Dated: May 20, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 99-13432 Filed 5-26-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 042199C]

Taking of Threatened or Endangered Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Proposed Permits

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of proposal for issuance of permits; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS proposes to issue permits for those fisheries that have negligible impacts on marine mammal stocks listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for a period of 3 years. This action would allow the incidental, but not intentional, taking of marine mammals in commercial fishing operations.

DATES: Comments on the proposed permits will be accepted through July 12, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Chief, Marine Mammal Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-2337.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dean Wilkinson, NMFS, 301-713-2322.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 101(a)(5)(E) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) requires the authorization of the incidental taking of individuals from marine mammal stocks listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA in the course of commercial fishing operations if it is determined that (1) Incidental mortality and serious injury will have a negligible impact on the affected species or stock; (2) a recovery plan has been developed or is being developed for such species or stock under the ESA; and (3) where required under section 118 of the MMPA, a monitoring program has been established, vessels engaged in such fisheries are registered in accordance

with section 118 of the MMPA, and a take reduction plan has been developed or is being developed for such species or stock.

"Negligible impact" as defined in 50 CFR 216.103 and as applied here is "an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival."

Section 118 of the MMPA requires the registration of vessels in fisheries listed as either Category I or Category II on the annual list of commercial fisheries. A Category I fishery is a fishery with "frequent incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals." A Category II fishery is a fishery with "occasional incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals." Registration is not required for Category III fisheries which have "a remote likelihood of or no known incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals." The list of fisheries for 1999 was published on February 24, 1999 (64 FR 9067).

On August 31, 1995 (60 FR 45399), NMFS issued interim final permits for those fisheries meeting the conditions under section 101(a)(5)(E) of the MMPA. As a starting point for making determinations, NMFS announced it would consider a total annual serious injury and mortality of not more than 10 percent of a threatened or endangered marine mammal stock's potential biological removal (PBR) level to be negligible. PBR is defined in the MMPA as "the maximum number of animals, not including natural mortalities, that may be removed from a stock while allowing that stock to reach or maintain its optimum sustainable population." NMFS also announced that such a criterion would not be the only factor in evaluating whether a particular level of take would be considered negligible. Because population abundance and fishery-related mortality information used in calculation of PBR have varying degrees of uncertainty, NMFS determined that such factors as population trend and reliability of abundance and mortality estimates also should be considered.

Based on requirements of section 101(a)(5)(E) of the MMPA and these criteria, NMFS issued interim final permits to allow the incidental, but not intentional, taking of three stocks of endangered or threatened marine mammals: (1) Humpback whale, central north Pacific stock; (2) Steller sea lion, eastern stock; and (3) Steller sea lion, western stock. Permits were issued for Category I and Category II fisheries